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conspiracy against Amaziah and Azariah's accession.\* This would bring these events in the year Jehoash died, and make Jeroboam's reign two years longer.

These are all the inscriptions which need to be examined, as the later ones present no serious difficulties. We thus find that there is a very close correspondence, with one exception, between the Bible and the Assyrian inscriptions examined, and this one exception is not necessarily an exception, and is no better explained by any other chronological arrangement. If this arrangement is the true one, all the numbers given in the Book of Kings, from the death of Solomon at least, are correct and need no change whatever.

In closing, it may be added that this chronology gives about 393 years between the revolt of Israel under Jeroboam I. and the return from captivity in the first year of Cyrus. This corresponds very closely with the 390 years of Ezekiel (Ezek. iv., 5).

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## HOW WE SHOULD STUDY THE BIBLE.

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Not that the writer has anything novel to communicate in this direction. Nevertheless, it is good to have our pure minds occasionally stirred up in way of remembering old lessons, however well we know them, and are established in them.

1. *Study the Bible personally.*—We must do our own investigating. I am not sure but that sometimes we are more hurt than helped by the immense amount of commentaries and "lesson helps." In all events, we must do our own thinking, evolving for ourselves what God has involved in his own Word. For the Bible is inexhaustible, having for the true student one meaning to-day, and another meaning to-morrow; and both meanings are true. In the Dresden gallery of royal gems there is a silver egg: touch a spring, and it opens, disclosing a golden chicken; touch the chicken, and it opens, disclosing a crown studded with gems; touch the crown, and it opens, disclosing a magnificent diamond ring. So it is with the Bible: as we study it, we touch successive springs, disclosing exhaustless treasures. For so Augustine says: *Habet Scriptura haustus primos, habet secundos, habet tertios.* Again: we must compare Scripture with Scripture: for the Bible is its own best commentator. We must study the Gospels in light of each other; for they constitute a beautiful specimen of divine mosaic, complementing and interpreting each other. So also the Acts of the Apostles often interpret in a striking way the Epistles of Paul. And we must study the Old Testament not less than the New; for both Covenants form one divine unit or rather unity. As Augustine finely says: *Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet, Vetus in Novo patet.* We must study Genesis in light of Revelation, Exodus in light of Gospels, Leviticus in light of Hebrews, Chronicles in light of Acts, Psalms in light of Epistles, Ezekiel in light of Apocalypse, and *vice versa*. Again: we ought to master the subtle principles which lie at the foundation of Hebrew poetry and

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\* The longest arrangement of the chronology at the date of the accession of Amaziah will coincide with Prof. Beecher's arrangement without changing the date of Azariah's accession.

prophecy, especially the principle of parallelism ; for while our rhyme is the rhyme of sound, the Hebrew rhyme was the rhyme of thought, or, as Ewald beautifully expresses it, "The rapid stroke as of alternate wings, the heaving and sinking as of the troubled heart." Again : we ought to become familiar with the geography and natural history as well as the chronicles of the various countries mentioned in the Bible : for the pith of an argument or the beauty of a sentiment often lies buried in a dry archæological fact. The discoveries of oriental travelers often strikingly illustrate some dark passage or confirm some disputed statement of Holy Writ. A true map is in a certain sense a part of the Scripture itself. No subject of attainable knowledge which can be made to shed light on the sacred volume should be allowed to intimidate us by the difficulties which environ it, or escape our vision in its seeming insignificance. Again : we must put forth all our mental powers ; so that we shall be able to perceive acutely, conceive accurately, reason closely, and express clearly. We must learn how to detect and trace delicate analogies, and bring out the real points in parables and comparisons. In encountering a difficult doctrinal passage, we must not only strive to take in the outlines of the argument, but also to detect and supply the subtle and often unexpressed links of thoughts. Above all, in pondering some particular clause of a paragraph, we must observe the general drift. If we had written a letter to a friend on some important topic, we would not think it fair in him to isolate a clause, and present it unmodified by the context ; we would say to him, Quote the whole trend. Once more : we ought frequently to summon the aid of the imagination : for this noble faculty of man, no less than reason, is the gift of God, and hence is intended for use. Our conceptions of biblical heroes and scenes would often be far more vivid and truthful were we to avail ourselves of imagination in transporting ourselves among them. For example : In order to understand the Creative Week, we must stretch our wings for a prolonged flight through the ages of the past, resting not till we stand by the Hebrew Seer on his mount of inspired vision, and gaze with him on the gliding panorama of emerging creation. To understand the Epistles of Paul, we must link our fortunes with his, sitting with him at the feet of Gamaliel, being arrested with him on his way to Damascus, accompanying him in his long and perilous journeys, toiling with him in the workshops of Corinth and Ephesus, feeling with him the Pharisee's sting in Jerusalem and the philosopher's sneer on Mars' Hill, suffering with him shipwreck in the Adriatic, wearing with him the chain in Rome. In short, we must become Hebrews ourselves, dwelling with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob as sojourners in the land of promise, ascending with Moses the mount of God, pacing with the watchmen on the walls of Zion, bending our bows with the archers of Ephraim, weeping with the exiles by the rivers of Babylon, feeding our flocks with the shepherds of Bethlehem, and casting our nets with the fishermen of Galilee.

But let us beware of the old sin of being devoted to the mere letter of the Scripture. For, in these days of numerous and elaborate exegetical helps, the temptation is even stronger with us than it was with the ancient rabbins, to take a microscopic study of the words of the Bible, and so magnify the letter, which by itself killeth, as to obscure and lose sight of the spirit, which alone giveth life. It was said by Edmund Burke : "No man comprehends less of the majesty of the English Constitution than the *Nisi Prius* lawyer, who is always dealing with technicalities and precedents." We may devote so much attention to the outward tabernacle itself, noting its materials and shape and arrangements, counting its

curtains and loops and hooks and sockets and chapiters and fillets and pomegranates, as to have no time to enter within the veil, to behold the beauty of Jehovah, or to inquire within his temple. In undertaking to interpret the Bible, let us follow the example of the Mountain Teacher in his interpretation of the Mosaic statutes concerning murder and unchastity and oaths and retaliation. In other words: let us seek for the central under the superficial, the essential under the incidental, the eternal under the transient.

2. *Study the Bible humbly.*—This, of course, involves the point of docility. For every one of us carries an instinctive bias toward himself. Our moral judgment in this fallen world is like a loaded die; and the heavy side, whether we will or no, always tends to fall toward self. Accordingly, in studying the Bible, we are evermore tempted to put our own thoughts and wishes into the sacred text. Be it for us then, as we engage in Bible-study, to strip ourselves as far as possible of all preconceptions, searching, not for the confirmation of our opinions, but for the truth of God. Only the pure in heart—that is to say, only those of unmixed, pellucid motives—shall see God. We must also remember that the Bible opens to us a realm in whose measureless height and depth and breadth the mightiest of earth's intellects is lost, as an atom in the universe of matter. Here is a sense in which it is nobly true that the more we know, the less we know; the loftier the height, the vaster the horizon. Sir William Hamilton never uttered a truer paradox than when he said: "The highest reach of human science is the scientific recognition of human ignorance." The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and the meek he will guide in judgment.

3. *Study the Bible prayerfully.*—In the vision of the apocalyptic book sealed with seven seals, one only out of all on earth or in heaven was able to break the seals and read the scroll: it was he who is alike the Lion of Judah and the Lamb of God. And he is still the only one who is able to interpret his own volume. We must consult him, then, if we would understand his Word. After all, scholarship is but a telescope: no matter how perfect the instrument is, it is useless until applied to the eye; and then, when properly adjusted, it opens a vision of majestic orbs. Even so let the mental telescope be adjusted to the eye of faith; and then even those spiritual nebulae, whose faint lustre scarcely arrests the passing glance, will be resolved into majestic orbs and systems of truth. Let us ever remember that it is not till the Holy Spirit does his work within us that we can understand his Word without us. Ah, my friend, you may be a most ardent student of Scripture, you may be perfectly versed in all biblical lore, you may be able to expatiate with all the learning and eloquence of a Paul on the transcendent themes of Revelation: yet, in spite of all this, the Bible will be to you a sealed book, even wrested by you to your own destruction, until the day dawn and the day-star arise—where? In your own heart. Pray then that the Spirit of God may

"Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
Irradiate: there plant eyes; all mist from thence  
Purge and disperse."

In his light alone shall we see light. Let us ever study the Bible then as on our knees.

4. *Study the Bible executively.*—That is to say, let us *do* the truth as well as believe it; execute the lesson as well as learn it. In fact, doing the truth is the only way of really believing it. Let us study the Bible then with the sincere and ardent purpose of executing God's will as he shall reveal it to us. Then will

our Heavenly Father station us as on the Delectable Mountains of the immortal Dreamer; and ever and anon our ears will catch clearer echoes of the angelic music, and our eyes command a more magnificent sweep of the glories of the celestial Canaan.

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## HEBREW IN COLLEGE.

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In most cases all the Hebrew instruction which our ministers receive is received in the theological schools; and it may be added that the majority of students graduating from those institutions and going forth to interpret the Bible, are no better prepared to study the Old Testament critically for themselves than the average candidate for admission to a first-class college (making allowance for difference of age) to pursue independent critical studies in the field of Greek literature. Indeed, as far as the amount read is concerned, the advantage is decidedly with the latter. This is not altogether the fault of the instruction given in the theological schools. More time is there bestowed on Hebrew than on almost anything else. But the language must be learned from the very foundation. In every other department of study the student finds himself doing advance work, learning something practically applicable in the vocation which he intends to pursue, while in Hebrew he is set to learn an alphabet, paradigms, inflections, and rules. This he ordinarily will not do; for, in comparison with his other work, it seems to him mere worthless child's play. And, unless a man have a special aptitude for languages, the time spent on Hebrew in the theological course is apt to be, if not time wasted, at least time not spent to the best advantage. Most men do not, in the time allotted, and under the conditions above noted, acquire such a grasp of the language as to do much profitable exegetical work during their course, much less to retain a working knowledge of it in after years. To read Hebrew is to most graduates of our theological schools a task so slow and tedious that, amid their active pastoral duties, they have neither the time nor the inclination to consult the Old Testament in its original tongue, and before many years their Hebrew has become altogether a dead language. There were nearly thirty men in my seminary class. Of these one man beside myself really applied himself with zeal and industry to the study of Hebrew. Seven years after graduation that man wrote me that he had forgotten his Hebrew entirely. Out of nearly thirty men one only knew anything about the language. This may be an extreme case, but it was my own experience. I may add that the only exegetical work on the Old Testament which we ever professed to do during our theological course, was done on the Books of Nahum and Jonah.

The contrast to these conditions in Germany is remarkable. In the theological department of a German university the students are supposed to be able from the outset to follow exegetical and critical lectures on the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, and also to prepare discussions of difficult passages to be submitted to the professors, or argued in the class-room. As a graduate of a prominent American theological school I actually found myself at a disadvantage in fluency of reading and grammatical precision in comparison with not a few